632 procedures I could not discover. One of the members of the *ayuntamiento* automatically serves as mayor, the office rotating from one *barrio* to another each year.

In addition to the *ayuntamiento*, there are a secretary and a treasurer, both chosen by the *ayuntamiento;* a *síndico*, who is one of the members of the *ayuntamiento;* an elected judge and *suplente* and a secretary of the court.

[624] Certain other duties are performed by *comisionados*, that is, persons commissioned by the *ayuntamiento* or by the mayor. These include the 4 *barrio* chiefs and the 45 block chiefs. *Comisionados* may also be named for special duties in connection with fiestas or public works.

In addition to the above officials, there are other groups with special duties. The representative of the people, *representante del pueblo*, and two assistants are named by the town. The representative is confirmed in office by the Governor of the State and stays in office until deposed. His main duties are looking after the public lands. Finally, there is the *reserva*, headed by the *jefe de defensa*. The [625] *reserva* is a group of armed men, 11 in number, [662] authorized by the State military authorities, and, at the time of the study, headed by the real political boss of the town.

The nature of these offices will now be described in more detail.

Ayuntamiento.—Five *propietarios* and five *suplentes* make up the group, serving 2 years. Those from odd-numbered *barrios* are elected one year, those from even-numbered *barrios* the next year. Cheranástico was classed as an odd-numbered *barrio;* what is done now is not clear. One of the members of the group serves as mayor, the other as *síndico*. The remaining members participate in policy decisions and in the naming of certain officials. Otherwise they have few duties. The *suplentes* apparently sometimes participate in discussion, but they have no real function except in case of the death or absence of their *propietario*. Members of the *ayuntamiento* receive no pay. Normally they meet once a week to discuss municipal affairs.

Mayor or Presidente Municipal.—In years the odd-numbered *barrios* elect, if the mayor is to come from *barrio* I, the *síndico* comes from

632 before the judge. In such cases he may dis-
693 cover falsified documents, and will levy fines against the guilty party. Disputes over land ownership may come before him also and usually will be settled without reference to higher authorities. An example of the latter type of case occurred where a person occupied lands belonging to Aurelio Ceja S., which the latter had registered for 20 years. The intruder was
[685] sentenced to return the land, pay the owner 10
[691] percent of the value, and all costs of the litigation.

The judge receives no pay, but he is assisted by a secretary who is paid $1 a day by the *municipio*. The secretary may collect fees for preparing private documents. More detail on judicial cases will be given later.

● 625 *Police.*—Two (later three) men were em-
632 ployed as police in 1940-41. Their main duties were not actually police functions, however, but rather the running of errands and carrying messages for the mayor, *síndico*, and judge. Most real police functions are carried out by the *síndico*, *veeder*, and the *ronda*. The police receive 75 centavos daily; all are persons incapacitated in some way for heavy work.

Comisionados.—There are many kinds and
632 classes of *comisionados*. Perhaps most impor-
624 tant are the four *barrio* chiefs, the *jefes de cuartel*, appointed by the mayor each year. These men, together with the previous officials, are exempt from any other service during their year of office. The *barrio* chief commands the block chiefs and also the *ronda*. He transmits instructions of the *ayuntamiento* to the block chiefs when necessary.

The block chiefs are also appointed by the mayor for 1 year, and they have no other duties. On instructions from the *barrio* chief, the block chiefs notify the residents in their block if any communal labor is necessary, such as repairs to the water system, road or bridge work, clearing of town boundaries, or work in connection with a fiesta etc., and they see that each person does his duty. Special block chiefs may be named for unusual events such as the taking of the census. Such special block chiefs serve only for the time necessary to complete their special assignment.

632 The *ronda* is a "voluntary" night watch. The
625 town is patrolled every night by a group of 8 to

632 12 men under the orders of the *barrio* chief.
625 The latter has the duty of notifying individuals when they are to serve. Each *barrio* provides the *ronda* for a week in turn, and each individual serves a week every time he is called. Theoretically, every adult male is expected to perform this service, but the men over 40 or 50 years and persons of some distinction are seldom if ever asked. One of the assistants in the project, member of the committee in charge of communal property and a school teacher, had not been asked to serve for several years. Neither do the storekeepers serve; instead, they give a package of cigarettes or some 10 centavos to
[431] those who do serve. There is no obligation, nor any regularity, about this gift. The average man who is asked to serve probably is called on four or five times a year.

Comisionados may also be named if funds
632 are to be raised for some special municipal
651 purpose. The purpose may be to send a delegation to Morelia or Mexico City to look after the interests of the town in some affair, or to purchase material for some public work for which funds are not available in the treasury, such as the materials for the water tanks. This may happen twice in a year or may not occur at all. The *comisionados* are charged with collecting the money in their *barrio* or whatever area is designated.

796 There are many *comisionados* in connection
632 with fiestas. For the fiesta of the patron saint in October, some 70 *comisionados* are named to raise funds for music, fireworks, and other expenses of the fiesta. A group is named by the mayor for each *barrio*, and it has the responsibility of raising money through taking up a collection (or members paying out of their own pockets), conducting negotiations with musicians or fireworks makers, and seeing that the work is completed. In addition, four men are commissioned each to provide a moro
[535] dancer. The *comisionado* has to seek out a dancer, pay for his food and costume, and take care of him during the fiesta. Finally, at least 40 young men (10 or more from each *barrio*) are commissioned to provide poles for building the bull ring. The total for this fiesta is not less than 114 *comisionados*.

For the fiesta of Corpus, eight *comisionados* are named for each *barrio* for each occupation

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.10?a] Sierra Tarascans

632 796 represented in the fiesta. Each major traditional occupation is required to hire a band, and the *comisionados* must raise the money by taking up a collection or by paying out of their own pockets. A separate set of *comisionados* is named to take up another collection to hire music for the celebration of the Octava. Voluntary service is also given by the bee hunters. The total *comisionados* for this fiesta probably reaches 250. *Comisionados* for a fiesta often put in many days of labor.

632 651 One final type of *comisionado* should be mentioned, the men named to do communal labor. Probably every eligible man has to put in 2 or 3 days a year on such work. This may be for work assigned to a *barrio*, or it may be some community-wide program such as cutting poles for the erection of an electric light system.

At a rough estimate, probably each man eligible for commissions gives about 14 days or nights of service a year to the community, if it be taken into account that about half the adult males are exempt for reason of age or service such as office holding, school teaching, store keeping, etc. However, the work is probably very unevenly distributed, for there is no systematic method of assignment. A person who raises many objections or who is not in proper economic condition may evade many commissions. For example, no right-minded mayor would commission a poverty-stricken man to bring out a moro. Consequently, persons who are conscientious and do not complain are apt to receive many more commissions than others.

632 625 *Reserva.*—The *reserva* consists of 11 men armed by the Government (State or Federal?) with modern weapons and, in 1940, captained by the real political boss of the town, Moisés Valencia. Although all were agreed that the 11 were chosen by the people, no one seemed to have any idea of the mechanism of choice. In all probability the group was chosen in the same way Valencia was chosen political boss, through aggressiveness in defense of town interests and personal popularity. Even a town the size of Cherán does not need formal elective machinery at times in order to express popular will, as will be seen in the discussion of elections. During the disturbed period in Michoacán during the installation of President Camacho, the reserve received instructions from the military

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
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632 district commander to arrest all strangers and
625 send them to Uruapan. So far as I could learn, nothing was done.

Representative of the people.—The represent-
632 ative of the people or *representante* is named by the people at a town meeting along with two other persons, forming an administrative committee. The representative is the *presidente* of the committee, another is a secretary, and the third is an ordinary member or *vocal*. The appointments are confirmed by the Governor and last until the people elect new ones at another *junta* or town meeting. None of the members receives any pay but the work is not onerous. Usually signing a few papers is the major duty. The reward, according to one member of the committee, is in being selected as one of the best "elements" in the town.

632 The collection of funds for use of the forest
651 lands is done by the inevitable *comisionado* system. With the approval and, if necessary, the backing of the mayor and *ayuntamiento*, the committee names the *comisionados* who collect 28 centavos from each householder every 2 months for the right to cut firewood on public lands. This money is used to pay the Federal taxes.

At present no one is supposed to cut wood
632 for lumber, charcoal, posts, etc., without secur-
313 ing a permit from the forestry service. (As
[474] indicated elsewhere, efforts were being made to concentrate all activity in the hands of a cooperative. The description here is of conditions before organization of the cooperative.) To prevent unauthorized exploitation of the forests by Cherán residents, or poaching by persons from other towns, a forester is employed to patrol the woods. The source of pay of the forester is obscure, but he is entitled to make use of a certain amount of fallen timber on his own account and if he encounters poachers from other towns (such as Zacapu, Carapan, and Purépero), he may either confiscate their products and sell them or charge the poachers 20 or 25 centavos for each burro load. The proceeds are kept by the forester.

The institution of the *representants* is rea-
632 sonably old; at least it has been in existence as long as men now living. While the representative apparently has no official responsibility, if things go wrong he is blamed. In 1939, a

[364] only on the days preceding a town fiesta. The
653 householder is also expected to work on certain community enterprises, such as repairing roads or bridges and the water system. Likewise, unless
625 he occupies some special position which exempts him, or is well along in years, he will be expected at times to join the *ronda*, or night watch, which polices his *cuartel*, or *barrio*.

Cherán is unique in its attitude toward visitors.
351 We have already mentioned the general occurrence of fences. These are usually high enough to prevent passers-by on the street from peering into the house yard. Visitors always knock at the
514 gate or call out, announcing themselves. As some-
609 times the inmates will not respond to a knock, the call is useful in getting a response. Unless the visitor is a relative, *compadre*, or neighbor

[continued on p.32b]

RELATION OF THE TARASCAN HOUSE TO THE ENVIRONMENT
CHERÁN

The wooden house, or "*troje*," of Cherán is
362 relatively dry but, in the absence of any method of heating, it is uncomfortably cold most of the year, especially at night. The kitchen floor is
[354] frequently damp; although it is heated by fire, ventilation is inadequate, and the smoke often irritating to eyes and throat. On windy days, also, drafts whistle through cracks or under the lower edges of the walls. The masonry-adobe type of construction also presents drawbacks. It is not heated either and, while wind is less apt to penetrate, it is often unsatisfactorily ventilated. Moreover, the dampness climbs up through the walls at least 6 months of every year and into every corner of the room.

Probably the "*troje*," or house loft, can most
251 easily be made impervious to rodents if it be well
362 built, and if bunches of cactus be fastened at strategic points on the outside walls. Rarely, however, is this true. In addition, the roof often permits entry of birds, particularly half-wild domesticated pigeons, and scarcely ever is anything done to prevent their forays on the maize. It is doubtful if the masonry-adobe structure is superior in any respect for loft storage. For main-floor storage it probably is inferior owing to the greater dampness. [continued bottom of

[p.32a] page 32b]